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A

LETTER

ADDRESSED

TO

A RETIRED GENTLEMAN,

ON THE

SPIRIT OF THE NEW MINISTRY

AND THE

SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

Φημι τοιωνυ δυο μεν ταυτα οικοθεν εχοντα ηκειν συνεσιν τε πολιτικην και δυναμιν
εξημευτικην—την μεν αδιδακτον τι της φυσικης δωρον—η δυναμις δε πολλη τε
ασκησει και ζηλω των αρχαιων προσγενηνημενη—(Aio igitur eum duo hæc
precipua secum afferre—*politicam intelligentiam, et facultatem eloquen-*
tiæ—quorum alterum nulla doctrina traditum, *naturæ quoddam est donum*
—*facultas autem eloquentiæ exercitatione multa, et studio antiquorum*
comparanda.)

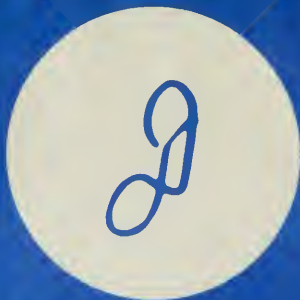
LUCIAN.

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KINGSTON ONTARIO CANADA

LETTER,

&c.

You observe, Sir, that the ascendant of Mr. Canning has produced effects partaking of the miraculous. The transformation of a country baronet, from the representative of his brother boot-maker, to be the mouth-piece of opposition in the House of Commons, is indeed not quite so violent a departure from the order of nature as the human speech of the prophet's ass—but it was quite as unthought of. I trust I may, without levity, add the hope that these strange signs are in favour of the Minister; and if the possessed or preternatural baronet should continue to speak curses, the augury will be made out in the good word of the people.

It is now about a dozen years since you abandoned this metropolis and busy life. The great principle of human change—in other words, the principle of human knowledge—has worked more

powerfully in that short period, than in any preceding half century, not excepting that of the Reformation. During the French revolution and its wars, England felt strong excitements and violent alternations, with the chances and changes of war and commerce—and the Continent suffered convulsions and avulsions, still more violent and tremendous, from the fury of the passions, or from military force. But since and during the peace, the community of this country has undergone a great moral or intellectual revolution, unexampled in history. A vast cycle of human knowledge, in the useful arts and practical sciences, has revolved in a short compass of time. This revolution is better known than perceived by us. It would seem that, in the moral as in the physical system, the very velocity with which we are borne puts it beyond the perceptions of our sense, and leaves it to the conclusions of our reason.

I have been not altogether inattentive to this great and growing change; and one fruit of my observation is, that so far from regarding the recent dissolution of the Ministry as violent or unnatural, it came upon me as its euthanasia, the only question being, whether it should happen a little sooner or later—and whether it should make way for the ascendant of Mr. Canning, or some other man of an administrative genius in unison, and on a level with the spirit of the age.

The late Lord Londonderry worked through the routine of government with a penury of intellect and acquirement really (if the expression be allowable) stupendous. He seemed to exist for the great purpose of shewing how poor a thing in all but birth and borough influence might become an English Minister—of proving the minimum of human brains with which a nation might be ruled. Lord Londonderry had the ministerial lead in the House of Commons. No man so abounded in words; yet so scanty, creeping, and confused were his ideas, that his attempts at the figurative were a whimsical jumble of images the most trite and meagre; and he never could arrive at the finishing of a sentence, or turning of a period, in his life. The only start from common-place he ever made, was calling the discontents of the people “an ignorant impatience of taxation.” This solitary luckless abuse of a pointed phrase, stuck to him like his “fundamental feature,” to the end of his career—and the abuse only of the phrase—not itself—was his own. His incapacity was still more mischievous and mortifying abroad. The figure he made at Paris after the fall of Bonaparte was most humiliating. His ignorance of the social intellect of Europe past and present, in arts, literature, and politics—his silly adoption of the aristocratic insolence and despotic tone of the ministers, princelings, and monarchs—his

new associates—his impertinent false shame of the plebeian liberty of England—these were the common theme of wonder, pleasantry, and contempt, in the drawing-rooms of Paris, and among the educated and reflecting men of many nations with which Paris usually abounds.

Mr. Canning visited Paris some time after—then unconnected with the ministry—by no means popular in England—and regarded with enmity by the Liberals of France. His accomplished and various talents—the mastery, frankness, and facility with which he encountered the topics of Parisian conversation, at times the least frivolous and the most free—obtained him the reluctant homage of the French capital—the most fastidious, jealous, and satirical in the world. The French think—and especially they then thought us a great, free, and most fantastical people. The most unaccountable to them of all our phantasies was, that the fortunes and fame of a free people should be trusted to Castle-reaghs, whilst we had amongst us Cannings.

Never did nation hold a more commanding position than England upon the fall of Bonaparte. Aggrieved individuals and oppressed nations appealed to her as the arbitress of their rights and destinies. She had proffered to her the high and heroic part in the great drama of the world, and she consented to play the most subordinate—the meanest. In France the odium

of having stripped the Louvre of those monuments of art which the French had purchased with their blood—which the owners ceded by formal convention—and the still darker odium of the blood of Ney; through the rest of Europe the execrations of nations partitioned, despoiled, or yoked against their grain—these are the garlands of victory with which my Lord Londonderry crowned England.

Constitutional or liberal ideas were to England, at this time, what the Protestant interest had been before. The principle was the same, differing only in name and form. The Emperor of Russia and his advisers thought very naturally that England, following her ancient and congenial policy, and fulfilling her more recent pledges, through ambassadors and emissaries, sent out as apostles of independence, preaching liberty and promising constitutions; that England, who had evoked the ancient Cortes and democracy in Spain, and set up a parliamentary constitution in Sicily would now espouse the interests of civilization and freedom, placing herself at the head and directing the march of “constitutional ideas” in Europe. He saw the force which this would place in her hands and resolved at least to divide it with her. Hence the ostentatious display of liberalism made by this sovereign, which for a moment duped the liberals of France. But soon finding that my Lord Londonderry had much more sympathy with despotism

and spoliation, he threw off the mask of liberality and proclaimed that political creed and communion afterwards christened the Holy Alliance.

Liberal or constitutional ideas were, I have said, to England at this time, what the Protestant interest had been before—but with this difference, that she would derive much more force from these new elements. The protectress of nations in their independence and freedom, she would and must have been the first power. The Emperor of Russia, with his barbarous ambition and barren hordes, must have appeared her adversary or in her train, and could not touch her supremacy in either case. But when she abetted the pretensions of despotism, and opposed herself to the march of intelligence and the spirit of the age, she became a subordinate power. England, in contact with her native element, freedom, would be invincible,—cut off from this kindred contact, she could not sustain herself, even with her giant strength.

You will say, perhaps, England was not a secondary power, for the commander of her troops was appointed generalissimo of the allied army of occupation. It was a mere bauble, which could only gratify the vanity of the nation, or of the individual general.

The late Lord Londonderry committed this nation in the wake of the Holy Alliance, perhaps,

beyond his consciousness and intentions. Without knowledge, or sagacity, or European experience in politics, open to the hollow flatteries of courtiers, and fascinated by the attentions and gewgaws of emperors and kings, he was most likely practised on. He had to deal with men having an accurate topical knowledge of Europe, physical and moral, and trained in negociation, artifice, and intrigue. These expert persons won him beyond his depth. He had himself some sense of this at last, whether from the suggestions of his own mind or the suggestions or the rebuke of his colleagues. There are, in his later state papers, some indications of a disposition to liberate himself. The false position, however, was taken, and England substantially dispossessed of her European influence.

I will not fatigue you by retracing notorious public events, under the auspices of my Lord Londonderry—the partitions, spoliations, invasions, and occupations, the hypocritical tutelage, for the purposes of oppression and pillage, which the Holy Alliance exercised over the weaker nations. Lord Londonderry indeed, put forth his doctrinal protests with his sinuous imbecility of style, his equivocal epithets, and neutralizing qualifications—but voracious despotism meanwhile devoured or trampled on the rights of ancient and free states, and in-

dependent nations. He addressed a circular note to the Allied Powers in 1820, deprecating the assemblage of any more congresses, and any interference with the internal affairs of Spain, calling in to his aid the opinion and Spanish experience of the Duke of Wellington. But his lordship, even in this note, was "the politest of arguers," like Mrs. Malaprop, "every third word being on the side of the adversary." The Spaniards, for instance, must not be interfered with, because the Duke of Wellington, in the late war, found it "a trait of Spanish character to be obstinately blind to considerations of public safety." "But then there can be no doubt (he says) of the general danger which menaces, more or less, the stability of all governments, from the principles which are afloat, and from the circumstance that so many states of Europe are now employed in the difficult task of casting anew their governments, upon the representative principle." His hermaphrodite note was of course treated with indifference. He had compromised himself so deeply with the Holy Alliance, that even in this very note he identifies himself with it by the constant use of "we," and "our," and "us."

A new consultation of state doctors on the body politic of Europe, was accordingly resolved to be held at Verona, and his Majesty's ministers, as a matter of course, received an

invitation. Lord Londonderry's eyes were now effectually opened upon his own conduct, and the manner in which it was really viewed. His colleagues would no longer trust him beyond their immediate controul, and within the influence which had already proved so disastrous to him. The Duke of Wellington was chosen to go out in his stead. Lord Londonderry, with his mediocre talents, had personal spirit and political ambition. This mortification preyed upon his mind, disturbed his imagination, and led to his melancholy end.

The death of a public man, in England, and especially a death so lamentable and unexpected, tends greatly to assuage popular and political resentments. The honest hatred of the populace, deep-rooted, sincere, and savage, remained untouched; but there was among the better informed a re-action in favour of his memory. His social kindness, his fidelity to friends, his personal courtesy, were talked of too much. His servile complaisance to the councils of despots abroad, his predilection for the worst engines of government at home, gagging bills, dungeon bills, suspicion, espionage, and vile informers, the real or supposed fruit of his Irish experience, were talked of too little. Lord Londonderry had enemies—his vices may have been overcharged, and his character sometimes defamed in his life; but for this very reason he

was judged too favourably upon his death. Weak minds will affect to rebuke harsh censures of public men, under the vain delusion that they are rising above the level of party, to discern satire from truth, and give a lesson of impartial and superior reason to mankind. The most faithful resemblance is often conveyed in a caustic style, and no colours are so enduring as those that are burned in.—But to dismiss my Lord Londonderry.

The office of foreign minister now became vacant. The public voice with one accord designated Mr. Canning, and after some interval he was appointed. It was a momentous crisis for the nation and the new minister. The Duke of Wellington started for Verona when Mr. Canning was yet but forty-eight hours foreign secretary. The Duke, in the simplicity of his heart, supposed himself going to decide the fate of Greece; but, arrived at Paris, the French minister, M. de Villele, had the civility to inform him that the affairs of Spain should come under the consideration of the congress! It was quite a surprise upon his Grace, and least of all was a design against Spain expected or suspected from France, after the solemn assurances given by the French government of a resolution to maintain peace. The Duke wrote for fresh instructions from Mr. Can-

ning, who did instruct him forthwith, as follows :—

“ If there be a determined project to interfere by force or by menace in the present struggle in Spain, so convinced are his Majesty’s government of the uselessness and danger of any such interference, so objectionable does it appear to them in principle, as well as utterly impracticable in execution, that when the necessity arises, or (I would rather say) when the opportunity offers, I am to instruct your Grace, at once frankly and peremptorily to declare, that to any such interference, come what may, his Majesty will not be a party.”

Never was the credit of a government and the word of a prince prostituted with such effrontery as by the French ministry in this memorable transaction. The King of France was put forward to declare to the two chambers, in the face of Europe, that the military force stationed on the Spanish frontier was a sanitary cordon, to keep out the yellow fever, then raging in Spain. “ Those who imputed to him other intentions (his Christian Majesty said) were evil-minded calumniators.” After the lapse of a few weeks, the same ministers made the same Christian Majesty the unhappy and degraded vehicle of avowing that the pretended sanitary cordon was a real army of invasion, and was then crossing the frontier. The French minis-

ter, M. Villele, played his part personally with the same recklessness of good faith and common shame. He gave Mr. Canning the most solemn assurances not only of his pacific intentions, but of his scrupulous abstinence from any interference between the constitutional government and insurgent bands of the faith. But when reproached by the ultras with having wasted time in idle negotiations with England, he justified himself by saying, the army had not yet been in a condition to march, and he employed the time of mock profession and pretended negotiation in fomenting and aiding insurrection in Spain. His words are, "Every thing that could be done against the constitutional system was done. It was difficult to supply the extravagant demands for men and money made by the chiefs of bands; but assistance was given them—insurrection was stirred up wherever it was possible."

But there is here a complication of duplicity. That for which the French minister claimed with the ultras the scandalous merit of deception, was really vacillation. He writhed himself a thousand ways to escape the Spanish invasion, until the Jesuitical faction, the apostles of ignorance, political tyranny, and priestcraft in France, backed by the Emperor of Russia at Verona, forced him into the breach. How far Mr. Canning confided or did not confide in the

christian professions of Louis XVIII, or the ministerial assurances of M. de Villele, I will not take it upon me to conjecture. There are circumstances in which it is no reproach to have been deceived. The greatest of poets represents “a false dissembler” imposing even upon a “spirit of knowledge,” and accounts for it—

“For neither man nor angel can discern
 “Hypocrisy—the only evil that walks
 “Invisible—except to God alone.”

This only is to be observed—the man who thus outraged truth, and prostituted personal and public credit, is still at the head of the French Government, and Mr. Canning’s excuse rests upon having believed him only once.

I have cited, above, Mr. Canning’s instruction to the Duke of Wellington respecting Spain. Two courses were open to him, in that critical emergency—war or neutrality. He chose the latter. The public *feeling* was decidedly for succouring the Spaniards. The public *opinion* was for peace. All that was most national revolted against the perfidy of France, and the insolence of Russia; but war at the moment would have been a grievous interruption to the progress of public industry, and the improvement of the public resources in the state of peace. The great mass of reflecting people,

which may now be called the mass of the people at large, acknowledged while they regretted the wisdom of leaving Spain to fight, unaided, her own battle.

It was thrown out by some that the threat of war might have preserved peace, and saved the Spaniards; this would have been a petty if not a dastardly calculation: the nation or the man who but hints at the appeal to arms, should be ready to take the field, or meet the world's derision.

Again, the successor of Lord Londonderry—and a successor in office only forty-eight hours—was not in a situation to hazard the threat of war, with the fair chances of its having the effect of maintaining peace. The late minister had placed himself and the country in a false position with reference to the Holy Alliance. The despots were even misled by that minister, as to the real policy and principles of England. To prove that the Holy Alliance had been thus misled by Lord Londonderry into the belief that the English Government sympathized with them, one fact is worth a thousand arguments;—it is this :—

The French minister gravely asked the Duke of Wellington, at Verona, what support might be expected from England by France, in case she should deem it advisable to invade Spain! No latitude of French ignorance on English

affairs can, without the participation of my Lord Londonderry, account for this magnificent piece of diplomatic impertinence. I will venture to say that Mr. Canning, had he been there, would have flung it back with scorn and a sarcasm. The Duke of Wellington wrote home to know how he should reply to it!

The prudent duty then of Mr. Canning, or any other really British minister, must have been, before he hoisted his flag or ventured out of port, to right the nation and himself, and this operation he commenced by branding, in the instructions above cited, the attack upon Spain, with the reprobation of England, in terms frank, manly, and decisive. The Spaniards unhappily proved untrue to themselves. They disappointed the hopes, not of their friends only, but of all reasonable men. But let me not insult the fallen fortunes of a brave and generous people of ancient and high renown, or wound the feelings of some illustrious exiles in this country, whose fortitude in privation—whose dignity and talents, stripped of the *prestige* of rank and power—prove that they had not only courage and virtue enough to give freedom to their country, but capacity to govern it worthily after having made it free. Spain too, was the victim of circumstances too various to be touched here; and though the calamity has fallen upon the whole nation, the disgrace

belongs only to two or three individual traitors. But Mr. Canning neutralized the occupation of Spain, I mean the then only possible occupation, as far as England was concerned, by securing the independence of Spanish America. It was not till the present session of Parliament, when the despicable intrigue, which, from causes before stated, had been successful against Spain, was repeated against Portugal, that Mr. Canning avowed this stroke of his foreign policy. It appears to me that he was not exactly understood—and that when he said that he had neutralized the French occupation of Cadiz—when he proclaimed that he had called a new world into existence, to redress the balance of the old, he referred, not to his acknowledging the independence, and sending out consuls to South America, but to the following words addressed by him to the French Government, so far back as 1823: “We will not interfere with Spain in any attempt which she may make to re-conquer what were once her Colonies, but we will not permit any third power to attack or reconquer them for her.” These were the potent words that really created the independence of the new world—that prevented France from re-conquering the Spanish Colonies, and dividing the re-conquest with the Mother Country, and to which I apprehend Mr. Canning alluded in his speech.

Those who do not know, either by living on the Continent, or by following the current of public opinion in the journals and other transitory publications of France, have not the most remote idea of the effect produced abroad, by the succession of Mr. Canning to the inheritance of Lord Londonderry. The French party of ultras—that is, the party of Jesuits, hypocrites, darklings, servilists—those who would deprive man of all free action, both in his body and his mind—were alarmed to consternation. They tried at first to cajole him, and failed. They then gave vent to the basest calumnies on his character, his principles, his life, his birth; but the enlightened and the generous—the friends of knowledge, reason, and real order, were with Mr. Canning; and even in the French capital, the calumniators and the calumnies were exposed to the scorn of Europe.

Let us come to the more recent affair of Portugal—for I do not pretend to give you a history—even as the Italian painters call it—*in iscorcio*. Mr. Canning saw through the intrigue against Portugal, in which the King of Spain was the mere tool of the French ministry—or rather of the eternal faction that rules it—through a bigotted devotee, who thinks he is expiating the sins of his dissolute youth by the barren devotion of his passionless old age. Mr. Canning saw and met this intrigue, as it should

be seen and met, by any truly British minister—with British spirit and the British bayonet. He had, by this time, righted the vessel of the state. He was now in a position to hoist the national flag and unfurl his sails, and the nation, with one voice—in parliament and out—answered his signal with a British cheer.

Some persons threw cold water—if I may use a familiar expression—having in my eye a very vulgar man—some persons, I say, threw cold water upon the spirit of the minister and of the nation. Their organ was Mr. Hume, a person of mercenary occupation and sordid habits, up to that maturity of life when station cannot refine the manners, and wealth cannot liberalize the mind—who has contrived to obtain some notoriety in opposition, by his unmarketable inutility to government, and his personal obsequiousness to the public press. But Mr. Canning moved on in his career—with this qualification of his popularity—that is, with Mr. Hume by his side—like a Roman conqueror, in his triumph, chariotted with a slave, to remind him of the fate of war and of the liberty of Rome.

We now come to a melancholy occurrence—the visitation of Lord Liverpool. I was never a partisan of that minister—whom, justly or unjustly, I associated with the Sidmouths and Eldons—*et hoc genus omne*—the race of alarm-

ists and intolerants—the sworn enemies of all innovation, and therefore of all improvement—those who see an end of religion, morality, and order, unless the human mind be stationary and fettered. But I had a sort of personal kindness for the man. In his sentiments and practice, he was mild and tolerant; he shewed, as I have been informed, some British spirit in the cabinet when he found Lord Londonderry tying England to the tail of the Holy Alliance; and he was always disposed to sustain Mr. Canning at his proper level in administration. Upon the illness of Lord Liverpool, and its notorious hopelessness as to public business, the question “who is to be prime minister,” spread like wildfire.

There was some talk of Lord Harrowby as the successor. Respectable as a cabinet minister, he could be only a nominal Premier—a ministerial pageant. Mr. Peel was mentioned—I shall reserve him for the present, but only for a moment. The Duke of Wellington, according to the public papers, “was possessed with the idea that he should be the head of the ministry”—“head of Confucius!!!”—was the journalist’s laconic and conclusive commentary on this strange idea of his Grace. There was a rumour of Lord Lansdowne’s “coming in,” but no mention, that I am aware, of Lord Grey. Mr. Can-

ning then, to use a sporting phrase, had it hollow against the field.

Now began to act the elements of discord and dissolution in the cabinet. Nothing is more notorious than the existence of a certain portion of the surviving Pitt school, afraid of knowledge, jealous of talent, and hostile to Mr. Canning. The friendship of Lord Liverpool, and the ascendant power and popularity of his own talents sustained him; still the resistance to him was such, that he latterly made brilliant apparitions in parliament, rather than moved regularly in the ministerial sphere. His succession to Lord Londonderry was far from agreeable to those old cabinet fixtures and the spiders that crawled round them. The succession to Lord Liverpool, devolved, or about to devolve, upon him, by the suffrage of the nation and the will of the sovereign, filled them with dismay. They must get rid of him, or yield up the ghost. They sent in their resignations, which, to their surprise, were graciously accepted; and to their still greater surprise, petitions did not pour in, from all quarters of the kingdom, soliciting the King to recal them. On the contrary, the nation, with one voice, congratulated itself and the King on this most happy deliverance.

I speak only of the old and used stagers—the unimprovables and incorrigibles—the alarmists and intolerants—those who are seized with

the same horror of freedom in religion and in trade—bigots in the one, pedlars in the other—who had not for thirty years opened a printed book, and were incapable of discovering a general principle themselves—in short, the *caput mortuum* of toryism.

“Know thyself” is a very antient and oracular counsel—and self-knowledge is doubtless rare; but it is quite as rare that persons should mistake themselves so egregiously as these noble and antient lords: let us review them for a moment in their order, and in passing.

My Lord Westmoreland, Lord Privy Seal—a person utterly destitute of capacity or acquirement—alike incompetent to advise any measure in the council of the sovereign, or vindicate it in the council of the nation—with such a dash of the ridiculous in his incapacity, that he closely resembles that standard personage of our earlier drama, “a foolish lord of the court.”

Lord Bathurst’s gravity is less comic—his dulness more imposing than the “precedent lord’s,” and he is perhaps a little higher in the scale of rationality; but if he had gone off as he ought, with “that visitation of Providence which every one has had once, and no one a second time in his life, like the small-pox,” viz. the Doctor, Brother Bragge, and Brother Hiley—the country and the public service never would have missed him. Little fitness as my

Lord Bathurst has for morning deliberation, he has still less left for evening debate. Have you heard of his dignified gambols in the House of Lords about Bonaparte's complaint of the St. Helena allowance or quality of wine, and the peculiar appropriateness of my Lord Bathurst's levity at the particular moment he was speaking? How could this man have the folly to suppose that any creature above a mercenary expectant of some appointment in the colonies, or of a small No-popery cure of souls, would stir in his behalf!

For poor Lord Melville it was only a miscalculation of the chances: he thought Mr. Canning could not stand, and hedged off to the safe side, as he judged it. He played for a great stake—has lost it—is a Scotchman, and of course amply punished. From the sceptred monarch of Scotch patronage he is become a poor and shrivelled thing, to which the corporation of Edinburgh will no longer vouchsafe the honour of a civic health. He is as shrunk and shrivelled as beau S——, not the shadow, not even the *penumbra* of what he was.

My little Lord Bexley, who saw your error in time to retrieve it, I had nearly passed you over. Mr. Vansittart—once a clerk in the Exchequer under Mr. Pitt—was ultimately promoted to be its chancellor, chiefly for his talent in arithme-

tical *chiaroscuro*, of which he was indeed a master. This made him a minister, and the king made him a lord. Nothing but compassion could have induced the acceptance of his penitence, for he is now not only the most incapable of the king's lords, but the most useless of the Lord's creatures.

Come we to the leviathan, John Earl of Eldon, Lord High Chancellor of England. —I have read it of this man, that "he ruined more families than a civil war."* This should be his epitaph. But surely he must be a person of rare talents and superior endowments, to attain and preserve a situation of such power, so flagrantly abused by him, for a quarter of a century. It was never said of him but by his sycophants, and they have abandoned him already. He was indeed an acute and skilful lawyer, and so plausible, that, by an assumed air of what the French call "*bonhomme*," he passed for a man of childish simplicity, with great genius; by an affectation of scrupulous, hesitating probity, he concealed his real idleness, or negligence, or the distraction of politics and cabinet intrigue; by an occasional episode of public weeping, he got a reputation for sensibility; and so long and plausibly had this man talked of his scrupulousness, and his sensibility,

* In the Times Journal.

and his conscience, that I could almost believe he succeeded in imposing, not only upon others, but upon himself at last. But he had a lynx-eyed decision where his interest or that of his party was at stake, and he was spiteful and vindictive as a woman or a priest. Witness his dastardly attack, in his own court, upon the professional character of a Chancery Barrister, who would not crouch to him in the House of Commons—witness his petty malice against Mr. (now Lord) Plunkett, in the House of Lords, which he was afterwards compelled to disavow. On the great questions of foreign and domestic policy, he was worse than ignorant, for he has the peddling errors and exploded prejudices of the last age. So unimbued is he with all knowledge beyond his trade as a lawyer, that he knows English history, not by reigns and dynasties, but by “*Tempore Nottingham*,” or “*Tempore Hardwicke*.” His flatterers, by the way, have compared him to Lord Hardwicke—I can discover nothing in common between them but Lord Hardwicke’s great, if not single vice, his avarice. But then in Lord Hardwicke this vice of the man gives relief and lustre to the chancellor. With avarice his ruling passion, Lord Hardwicke did not void the patronage of his court into his own coffers, by the colourable transaction of bestowing it on his family and dependents. The increasing

wealth of the country, his high judicial character, and his understood disposition to bend the rules of law to the principles of equity, caused a vast increase of business in his court; but he did not cloak and carry the love of pelf and the profits of delay under cover of a tender conscience and its scrupulous libations. His judgments are not more eminent for their soundness than they were satisfactory for their dispatch. Is this a resemblance of Lord Chancellor Eldon? My Lord Eldon, at a Pitt club dinner, since his abdication, boasted that he never gave to A what belonged to B. Aye, my good Lord, but you kept the disputed property in abeyance, or you left it to be consumed by the lawyers, until both A and B died of starvation, or came into your Lordship's hands in a new capacity—no longer as litigants—but as lunatics. To have given B the property of A, or to A that of B, would be an evil lesser by half, as in this case one only of the parties would lose his life or his wits. The Earl of Eldon once gave alms to an old woman—a ruined suitor, as well as I remember the story, in his own court. It was proclaimed in the Court of Common Pleas, by one of the learned criers there, who soon after became a judge; and the sycophants of my Lord Eldon were as proud of this solitary act of charity, as the late Mr.

Whitbread once said Mr. Vansittart was of his solitary joke.*

The Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel do not belong to the group just passed in review. Mr. Peel, in particular, and with the best reason, has shewn himself anxious to stand aloof. The truth is, Mr. Peel was tired of them: he felt the incumbrance and the odium of the old Chancellor, as grievously as Mr. Canning himself. But Mr. Peel in secret groaned under the superiority of Mr. Canning, as deeply, and even more deeply, though less visibly, than they did. Mr. Peel made one fatal false step on his entrance into public life—by committing himself with the intolerants. He had the ambition to look forward very early to a political chieftaincy, and thought to come in upon the shoulders of the No-Popery people. He had not the sagacity to perceive that the party was one that must break down with the advance of knowledge and of the age.

Mr. Canning, who had come into life many years earlier, had the sagacity of principle—I will not say (for I believe it would be unjust) the sagacity of calculation—to join the more liberal of the Pitt school, and the master himself.

It was not till lately this superiority, with

* As proud as a hen with one chicken.

others, weighed painfully on Mr. Peel. Lord Londonderry, indeed, was a languid liberal in his way, and derived some advantage from it, but nothing to mortify the vanity of a subordinate, but rival colleague. Even as leader of the House of Commons—or perhaps it will be more respectful to say, in the House of Commons—his oratory was so wretched, that his lead must have gratified, instead of wounding the vanity of his rival. Mr. Peel was to him what the seconder is to the mover of the address, on which solemn occasion the eloquence, if there be any, always comes up with the reserve. But when Mr. Canning became ministerial leader in the House of Commons, all was changed. Now the chief derived still more superiority from his intellectual, than his conventional station. Imagine eloquence at once popular and classic,—erudition, imagination, and expert dialectics,—literature, wit, and pleasantry,—a delivery always forcible, sometimes electrical, on one side—then imagine an understanding exercised and informed, more of sophism than logic, considerable ingenuity of deduction, and difficulty of refutation, sameness of manner, unrelieved by wit, fancy, or vivacity, a certain monotony of cadence, rarely energetic, never impassioned, on the other—imagine this, and you have the best parallel I can give you at the

moment, of these two public men, as public speakers.

Mr. Peel made great and honourable efforts to counterpoise the advantages of Mr. Canning. He vindicated his No-Popery creed with moderation, and administered the home department as he had already governed Ireland—with, if not the superiority of a statesman, the superiority of a gentleman. Inspired more recently by a happy emulation, he started out of the sphere of an ephemeron existence in the cabinet, into a new career of magnificent ambition, viz., reducing to an orderly and accessible compass, the horrible chaos of English law. Whilst I am on these luminous points of the portrait of Mr. Peel, I cannot help bringing out a trait in his life, which, though it may appear only an example of private magnanimity, is in my judgment some earnest of disinterested, self-dependant, exalted public views. Mr. Peel might have connected himself by marriage with Parliamentary interest, and the highest nobility—he preferred worth without a dowry, “*virtutem sine dote*,” the daughter of a retired general officer, with only youth, beauty, and all the graces. It may be supposed that this trait is, to borrow a term of art, too pronounced for a sketch pretending to be historic—I do not think so. Mr. Peel must now curse the hour

he started with the intolerants; I do not impute to him dishonesty—but he cannot be sincere. A man who is on a level with his age in every other respect—in politics, commerce, agriculture, and finance, and above all one who has encountered, with the true spirit and genius of Reform, that part and parcel of the wisdom of our ancestors, which is most formidable and sacred to weak minds and timid characters—the law; such a man must be far above the vile bigotry of sect, or the silly fears of popery at the present day. I believe Mr. Peel, with his modest air and exterior repose, the most ambitious man in England. Let him, if he values his fame, and would have a free course for his ambition, fling off his livery of No-Popery:—it will trammel him more than the gown did Swift. England will not see a No-Popery administration again, until the night of barbarism returns upon her in the lapse of ages. The human mind may pass from light to darkness by revolving on—never by retrogression. His only chance was in the late crisis, and he signally failed.

I do not impute to Mr. Peel that he was initiated in the cabal of the invalids. But I do impute to him, that he caballed with, and practised on the Duke of Wellington. As Mr. Peel became impatient of Mr. Canning's superiority at home, the Duke of Wellington became

irritated by his reputation abroad—which, he well knew, now wholly eclipsed his own. The Duke of Wellington affects a rude disregard of popularity and courtesy, yet is he one of the most jealously little-minded of mankind. He so envied the late Lord Hastings his Indian victories, that he slouched his hat over his face, to conceal its workings, whilst Lord Liverpool was proposing the vote of thanks, and seconded the motion in a style of hollow effort and exaggeration. Whilst assisting at the bier, and holding the pall, of the late Mr. Grattan, he laughed like *Vulfennius*,* to prove his military contempt of the scene and of the crowd—but was yet cut to the quick when he saw the people turn away with more than disregard. He came late to dinner with the late King of France, and apologised for his boots and for the hour, by saying he had been riding in the *Bois de Boulogne*: “I shall be happy to meet you there, when you take your next airing;” said one of the French marshals present. I never heard what reply his Grace made, or whether he made any.† You are not aware perhaps that the *Bois de Boulogne* is a place where affairs of honour are decided.

* Continuo crassum videt Vulfennius ingens.

† This of course will not be understood as insinuating any want of personal spirit—but simply as an instance of the dulness of his apprehension.

The Duke of Wellington, with his achievements, must be a great general; senseless obloquy alone can contest it. But it is singular still, that he has never given the slightest sign of that generous gallantry which exalts the soldier to a hero; or discovered a single trait of "the war of inspiration," which usually stamps military genius, and the great captain. At all events he would be a most incapable Premier—it was probably Mr. Peel who "possessed him with the idea."

The seceders say they resigned without concert; I do not judge them as harshly as others have done, on this ground, as I think they had a perfect right to act in concert in the matter: but I am not convinced by their disclaimer. They only escape one horn of a dilemma, to be caught upon the other. If they did not communicate to each other in a proceeding of such delicacy—what distrust and disorganization in their councils! That at which I am astonished, is their incorrigible blindness. They might have mistaken the sense of the country—but how is it they were blind to the proof of their own weakness, by actual experiment, in their inability to muster the raw material of a list of names for a No-Popery Ministry? This surely should have opened their eyes. But their eyes must be open by this time. These presumptuous

persons have not strength enough to muster even an opposition. Messrs. Lethbridge and Dawson, Lords Londonderry and Ellenborough—here are the men of light and leading, who head, in both houses, an opposition of discharged subalterns, religious bigots, and narrow-minded rapacious proprietors of the soil. Lord Grey, indeed, came forward to declare that he could not give his confidence to the new administration. In this proceeding of Lord Grey, his friends have recognized not so much the manliness of his principles, as the stateliness of his character.

It is not my affair to vindicate the course pursued by Lord Lansdowne, and the Whigs. Nothing, indeed, seems to me more simple, and less in need of vindication,

What has enabled the liberal part of the cabinet, for a considerable time, to get rid of so many venerable absurdities in domestic and international trade, and in the navigation laws; to bring the principles of commercial science into practical operation; to overcome or to enlighten prejudiced, ignorant, or interested communities; to overcome (it being impossible to enlighten) the incrusted bigotry and ignorance of some of their own colleagues? What but the speeches in Parliament, and the writings out of Parliament, of the more able and instructed Whigs? When the progress of the

public mind and of events enabled the same Whigs to throw aside those who clogged the movement of intelligence in the cabinet, and to effect this public good, by only doing in form that which they had already done in fact, what should be thought of them, if they did not strike the blow?

If, after supporting the Canning portion of the administration for years, they started back from giving their express adhesion to Mr. Canning, when a great object was to be gained, or rather accelerated (for it must have been gained at last), viz., the invaliding of the Eldon party, they must have been as narrow-minded, and presumptuous, and infatuated, as the Eldon party itself.

But the Whigs abandoned Parliamentary Reform! Only think of the good grace with which borough corruptionists and alarmists complain of the abandonment of Parliamentary Reform!—It is too bad—as Lord Liverpool, it is said, endorsed on the present Lord Londonderry's pension prayer. Now, as to Reform itself: look back at its high water and low water marks, since the peace—you will I think arrive at the conclusion, that the cry for Reform is a mere diagnostic, by which the skilful observer knows that there is some secret malady of misgovernment. Let but a disposition appear to govern with good inten-

tion, even whilst the people are under privations the most severe, and you hear little of Reform. Reform has been abandoned by the people—not by the Whigs.

But then the Catholics! Think of the naughty manner in which Lord Lansdowne and the Whigs, have sacrificed the Catholic question. Think, too, what fools the Catholics must be, not to play the game of their deadly enemies.

I will not enter here into the extent to which religious liberty and the Catholics have gained, by the elevation of Mr. Canning; but if I had the honour to be a Catholic, as I have to be an Irishman, I would sink ten years of emancipation, at the age of twenty, or five years at forty, lost to me and my heirs for ever, to see real tears roll down the venerable cheeks of John Earl of Eldon, for the only loss that can really affect him—the loss of his profits and his power.

There is one aspect, of great and ominous uncertainty and importance, under which the change of ministry must be viewed—that is, as it regards the duration of peace.

No one thinks or imputes to Mr. Canning that he is not quite as little disposed as those whom he has succeeded or survived, to engage the country in hostilities. The only question is, whether his policy, which has been that of his liberal colleagues for years, is more likely to

plunge the country into a war, than that of his opponents.

When the general principles by which the machine of government, or any other machine, is actuated, are sound, it seldom, I might say, never happens, that any single result, seriously embarrassing or inconvenient, follows. The right, in moral as in physical science, is uniform and universal—the oblique is that which generates exceptions and difficulties. If, then, the policy of the administration be admitted sound and good, with respect to the other great concerns of the nation, it should require strong arguments indeed to establish the exception of our foreign relations.

One of the first and surest means of commanding peace, is to be prepared for war—and to impress upon others the sense of this preparation.

Is not this best done by maintaining the character of the government in an enlightened policy, and in its observance of the faith of treaties abroad—by administering the state in a manner best calculated to favour the industry, and improve the resources of the nation at home? If there be any question, of those incapable of being reduced to the demonstrative certainty of exact science, conclusively determined—it is, that the industry and resources of the country are favoured by applying, in prac-

tice, the philosophy of commerce, and by unmanacled the arts of industry, which, even more than the fine arts, flourish in a state of freedom,—as Mr. Canning and his liberal colleagues have done and are doing—not by the antiquated and exploded system of prohibitions, restraints, abortive bonuses, and mistaken protections,—to which his adversaries cling with superstitious tenacity. I will not go into this matter, not merely because it is beyond the grasp of a letter and my present purpose, but because it is argued and decided.

It is true that some wise Lords and Commons call Messrs. Canning, Huskisson, and Robinson, theorists, and, *oh nefandum!* philosophers!—and the system itself of free trade, “a set of newfangled notions.” But let it be remembered, that the Duke of Newcastle—a famous minister in his time, by the help only of a more than usual proportion of “free burgesses,” at the disposal of his family—the ancestor, I suppose, and a most worthy ancestor, of his unheard of Grace of Newcastle, who the other day enlightened the House of Lords and the nation, by his want of confidence in Mr. Canning—the Duke of Newcastle—the former I mean (to prevent his present Grace from mistaking me), gravely remonstrated with Lord Chesterfield upon the danger to the Church and

State, from his “newfangled notion” of reforming the calendar!

There is a harmony of wisdom in truly great views, however diverse from each other. In this way the great principle of freedom may be traced in its beneficent influence, alike in trade and in government. We find it thus acting doubly in the new world. The same policy which gives independence and liberty to the Spanish Americans, opens to English industry and produce a new and vast field for consumption and mutual barter. It is not necessary to prove that the independence of what were once the colonies of Spain is a vast opening for the growth and industry of England.

As to the old world—or, to confine myself to the more immediate point, as to the Continent of Europe—it is equally obvious that the relaxations of commercial restriction—even the very example and stimulus of relaxation and liberal intercourse given by the liberal part of the English cabinet, has had a great effect in interesting the more enlightened of the mercantile mass (and it is the more enlightened that actuates the mass, as the soul does the body) abroad, in the continuance of peace with England.

But the liberal policy—the segregation from the Holy Alliance—this it is said is the ingredient of the new cabinet, which is to precipitate all that is amicable to the bottom, and bring the

spirit of unmixed hostility to the surface, and to our lips.

It is not my opinion of the people of England, that, like a poltroon who censures his friend, because he had not succeeded in bringing him through a quarrel without fighting—it is not, I say, my opinion of the people of England, that they would place themselves in the hands of any minister whose motto was “peace at all events.” They would rather say, as an Englishman, a fair representative of them, would, in his individual case—“my safety and honour are in your hands—at all events guard my honour.” And this is not chivalry, or magnanimity—but prudence. Nations are to each other in the state of society and civilization as individuals in the state of nature. There is, it is true, a code of principles upon which studious speculators, without mission or authority, have descanted under the name of the “law of nations.” This, like all other laws, enforced by no due sanction, is a mere *brutum fulmen*! The Spanish government and Cortés made out an irrefragable case against the invasion of their independence, according to the *jus gentium*—but this was not authority to the barbarians of Russia, or the Jesuits of France. The only sanction is what these writers call “the appeal to Heaven”—which is the appeal to force. There is then no security for a nation but in its

having the courage and the means of defence and offence—in other words, having a good case for the high tribunal of superior force.

A minister, like an individual of sense and spirit, will not wantonly or unnecessarily provoke a quarrel; but he will not yield a particle of his just rights, well knowing that every inch of ground he yields is occupied and turned against him by the adversary: that the antagonist's disposition to exact increases inversely with the presumed disposition to concede; and that if he must fight at last, he had better do so without the disadvantage of having to recover lost ground.

Suppose we had in England a ministry, or the head of a ministry, which feared the power, or sympathized with the principles of the Holy Alliance—what would follow? The despotic and ambitious cabinets of Europe would circumvent and abuse the one, or intimidate the other. How humiliating and precarious such a state of England! A respite from war is most dearly and disadvantageously purchased, when war is ultimately to be encountered with diminished resources and impaired character.

I do not believe that illiberal or timid counsels would procure even the disadvantageous and mortifying staying-off of hostilities.

Mr. Canning, in his memorable speech on the affairs of Portugal, alluded to the powerful

mass of opinion on the Continent which England could, at her discretion, move and direct. This part of his speech made a great impression at home and abroad. At home it was deprecated by some, cavilled at by others, and burlesqued by Mr. Hume into his own vocabulary with an unsuspecting illiterate homeliness, infinitely humorous and amusing. Abroad it was made the fertile subject of discussion by ephemeral publicists and cabinet counsellors. There have been different versions of it in the newspaper reports. Another version, revised and semi-authorized, appeared as a separate pamphlet. To obviate objection I will state the substance in which they all agree. I take it then, that Mr. Canning, in showing that the government of England wanted neither spirit nor resource to maintain her dignity, her interests, and the faith of treaties abroad, enumerated, among other resources at her command, a formidable mass of opinion, ambition, and discontent, which she could wield for her purposes in war.

“What!” exclaimed the monks, bigots and servilists of Spain,—the ultras, Jesuists, and hypocrites of France, “would you let loose Jacobinism upon us?”

As to Jacobinism, the thing is defunct, and to preserve the name only leads to error. But if the question be, would England excite and employ the

the mass of restlessness, ambition, and discontent, the just alarm at the intrigues and pretensions of political and spiritual despotism, on the Continent, the answer obviously should be, "Yes, if you provoke it." It would be false prudence and dastardly reserve to withhold the avowal beforehand of an auxiliary which any British minister would be not warranted but obliged by his public duty and responsibility to employ. The relation of war extends widely the moral sphere of available annoyance between nations. That "all is fair in war" is a popular adage, sometimes misapplied, but in its strict acceptation substantially true. Not that war has not its rights and its humanity, but that many things, unjustifiable and criminal in the non belligerent, are blameless and fair in the belligerent relation. When the object was to resist the power, ambition, and animosity of Bonaparte, His Majesty's government did not scruple to rouse all that was restless, discontented, and excitable in Italy against the existing government. Was it that we approved the elements which we roused and patronized—the extremes of despotism and democracy? No, certainly. Was it for the good of the Italians that we stimulated them against the French vice-regal dominion? Beyond all doubt it was not; for no one, knowing any thing of the matter, will say that the condition of the

Italians has not been deteriorated and debased most grievously under the oppressive and uncongenial dominion of Austria. The most anti-Catholic members of the British cabinet did not scruple to fraternize with the Spanish monks, the most aristocratic with the Spanish democrats of 1808 and 1812. Mr. Pitt, in his struggle with the French revolution, did not scruple to administer to the hopeless carnage of La Vendée, in order to distract and weaken the force of the revolutionary government of France. The fault then would be in the frank avowal beforehand, which is too absurd. It might, on the contrary, have the good effect of influencing the adverse party to a better sense of the value of peace.

The general quiet of the Continent at present may be adduced as proof that there is no longer restlessness or discontent among the people, that sovereigns and subjects have taken their easy, permanent relative position—that the notions generated by the French Revolution have disappeared, and the fever which followed the fall of Bonaparte has subsided. This I believe has been urged, and in the most formidable way, as a matter of fact.

Granted that there are not now heated inflammable enthusiasts, disappointed and humiliated spirits, ready to embark in desperate conspiracy or mysterious association. But is

there not another mass of opposition to the views of the Holy Alliance, more formidable and powerful to reason, though less alarming to the imagination?

Russia had a factitious, transient pre-eminence under the late sovereign. The Russian is an empire, without intelligence—without capital—and without arts; such an empire can never be any thing of itself, as a leading power. The employment or the menace of its unvalued hordes may give it an air of importance. But it is not a leading power, because, thrown into the scale, it destroys the balance. It was Russia that forced the government of France to invade Spain—but how? By its own power and extrinsic force?—No, but as an instrument in the hands of a domestic French faction, which holds an impalpable, irresponsible dominion over French counsels.

Russia is I think at present greatly shorn of her ambition and of her pretensions to a lead in civilized Europe. Until we have some better authority than Russian state papers, and the German gazettes, for the natural death of the late emperor, persons who have any conscience of passing events may be permitted their doubts. If the present emperor has any views of conquest, they are directed to the East. The ambition to be a chief in European politics,

parties, and opinions, cost the late emperor perhaps even more than his tranquillity.

The Kingdom of Prussia is a mere cypher, incapable of giving an impulse of herself, and with scarcely any importance at present but her alliance with Russia.

The Austrian monarchy is mild, unambitious, and unimposing. With all Prince Metternich's ability, skill, and efforts, he could not obtain the revival of the title of "Emperor of Germany." He gained, it is true, the possession of Italy, but only because it was less dangerous to others in Austrian hands. France and Spain would have been, under other circumstances, powerful competitors, and with better titles. But the object, at the time, was to cut down the power and ambition of France; and for Spain, she had nothing left but her past history to console her for the injustice and ignominy with which she was treated. In Russia then, the present emperor will hardly run along the giddy precipice, trodden perhaps fatally by his predecessor; and in Germany there are no elements of active strife. The genius of the Germans has been greatly magnified with respect to hardihood of speculation. They are plodding and imaginative; but both properties of intellect are so blended, that in their poetry you are perpetually offended with

bad metaphysics, and in their metaphysics with bad poetry. They do not hit the true chord of passion or philosophy. They are what is called melo-dramatic in the one, and ruminating, narcotic visionaries in the other. They neither act themselves nor inspire others to act. What have they done in three centuries and a half since the Reformation? English subsidies and a Russian winter procured them the credit, such as it is, of their share in the fall of the French empire. Granted all this to those who say Europe is in a state of satisfied repose.

But the south and centre of continental Europe, the seat of European science and civilization, remains. Is Italy tranquil? It is the tranquillity of a spirit pressed not broken down, which wants only the hope and spring of independence to recover itself. There is doubtless much indolence and debasement in the Italian character, but there is much less ignorance and superstition than is supposed. The English tourist may talk self-complacently of the ignorance, bigotry, servility, and falsehood of the Italian nation, with no other experience than that of hotels and public vehicles. The enlightened English traveller knows there is a latent dormant power of civilization, knowledge, national spirit, independence—aye, and

courage—which waits only the chance of combat on fair terms, to display itself. Who that knows any thing of the geography of Italy, does not know that the fairest part of it is under the Austrian yoke? Who, that knows any thing of the temper of the Italians, does not know that the Austrian domination is not merely hated, but despised by them.

If there be a nation on earth to which fate or fortune, and the opinion of mankind, have been unjust, it is Spain. An unhappy concurrence of circumstances has produced in Spain a phenomenon unseen elsewhere. There is not in England, a booby, however ignorant, not a babbler, however superficial, who does not speak of the Spaniards as a barbarous, bigotted, ignorant nation. It is not the fact. In the last quarter of the last century, Spain took the lead in emancipating the Catholic mind from thralldom. Voltaire, who certainly had no partialities to gratify towards Spain, and who was writing to a Frenchman, says of the Spaniards, in the year 1775—

“ Un nouveau siècle se forme chez les Ibériens. La douane des pensées ne ferme plus l’allée à la vérité ainsi que chez les Velches—[the French]. On a coupé les griffes au monstre de l’inquisition, tandis que chez vous le bœuf-tigre frappe de ses cornes et dévore de ses dents.”

To another Frenchman, M. de Villevieille, he says, on the same subject—

“ L'inquisition d'Espagne n'est pas abolie, mais on a arraché les dents à ce monstre, et on lui a coupé les griffes jusque dans la racine. Tous les livres si sévèrement défendus à Paris entrent librement en Espagne. Les Espagnols en moins de deux ans ont réparé cinq siècles de la plus infâme bigoterie. ”

“ Les Espagnols avancent quand nous reculons. Ils ont fait plus de progrès en deux ans que nous n'en avons fait en vingt. Ils apprennent le Français pour lire les ouvrages nouveaux qu'on proscriit en France. On a rogné jusqu'au vif les griffes de l'inquisition ; elle n'est plus qu'un fantôme. L'Espagne n'a ni Jésuites ni Jansenistes. La nation est ingénieuse et hardie ; c'est un ressort que la plus infâme superstition avait plié pendant six siècles, et qui reprend une élasticité prodigieuse. ”

As I only touch the state of Spain, I shall in passing, state a fact without going into the circumstances which account for it. This fact is, that the social and political order have been inverted in Spain. The mass of the people are as far advanced as any, and farther advanced than some ; but the government has been for nearly half a century bigotted, imbecile, and corrupt. The intelligence, which ought to be in the governing power, was in the

governed mass, and the bigotry and barbarism, which should be subservient, ruled the public counsels. The character of the government has been mistaken for that of the nation, and the Spanish nation and character have been slandered through this confusion of ideas.

I was sorry to find this error sanctioned by Mr. Canning, in the speech to which I have already alluded. *He declared his conviction that there is, in the vast majority of the Spanish people, a predilection for slavery, and love of arbitrary power. What are the recent and indisputable facts? The Spaniards, beyond all doubt, co-operated, by a great national effort, with the English, against the intrusive government of Bonaparte. It may be said the moving principle was fanatical and servile. I should contend, on the other hand, that the enlightened love of liberty and independence greatly predominated—else why erect the Constitution of the Cortes? The great purpose at the time was to create such a governing engine as should most effectually bring into action the national energies; and this engine of government was not a “regency of Urgel,” of absolutists and servilists, but the Cortes and a free constitution. The King of Spain, by a piece of unheard-of, heartless infamy, taking the nation by surprise and treachery, restored despotism. Whence, but from the dominant spirit of freedom,

were the Cortes and the Constitution again re-established and obeyed through every village of Spain, without force or violence? The two military chiefs, Quiroga and Riego, with but a few regiments, in a small island, at one corner of the Peninsula, produced a revolution, not by force of arms which they could not command, but by an intrepid impulse, which vibrated to the heart and extremities of the Spanish nation. The same spirit of liberty either scattered or crushed the servile insurrections against the Cortes, in fomenting and supporting which, France had been alike lavish of treasure and intrigue. Constitutional Spain was indeed ultimately subdued when France attacked her with the whole force of her undistracted monarchy—when the other despots of Europe were drawn out against her in reserve—when England was neutral. I do say, then, that there exists in Spain a mass of intelligence, patriotism, and devotion to liberty, before which the French occupation of Cadiz would vanish as nothing—and at which the ultras and illiberals of France may tremble, in a war of justice and freedom waged by England. I venture to assert there is in Spain no larger proportion of the nation devoted to arbitrary power than existed in England at and after the revolution. But the revolution prevailed and survived in England, because Eng-

land was happily beyond the reach of foreign despotism, and the despots of the continent were not then solemnly leagued against liberty and constitutions, as they have been recently and fatally for Spain.

To come to the bosom of France, the central point of continental science, sympathy, and circulation. Formidable recollections have doubtless, to some extent, faded away, especially those merely personal; but eternal principles remain.

I will suppose the present king of France taking a survey from the throne of his own position, and of the analogies of history. It is our lot—I will not provoke dispute now by saying it is our merit—to be a couple of centuries before the French in the science of revolution. The French have in a short compass trodden fast upon our heels. France has had her regicide—her republic—her usurpation—her restoration—and here the parallel falls short for the present. Are there no elements in France to augur the possibility and inspire the fear of its completion?

The Bonapartean party is broken down. The old army is disorganized, or dead. But have the Bourbons regained their grasp upon the minds of the informed, and the sentiments of the uninformed people? There are no longer elements for desperate conspiracy. But is there no enlightened and powerful force of intellect and opinion in the French community, jealous

and alarmed at the inroads of political and religious tyranny upon the rights and liberties of the people ?

The government of France is at this hour as dependant upon opinion, and more afraid of it, than any other in Europe—and with reason. The French people are now initiated in the practical exercise of liberty—and the forms of representative government. Liberty of conscience, and independence of thought—political, literary, and speculative—the freedom of speech and of the press, are now become absolute wants of life to them—and these wants have been attacked, and are still menaced by despotism and Jesuitism.

The judges of the supreme court of Paris and the chamber of peers have most honourably distinguished themselves by their resistance to the visible attacks of the government, and the invisible and more deadly aim of the spiritual or theocratic faction, against the liberty of conscience, worship, and thought. The judges and the peers are indeed looked to as the safeguards of the nation's rights—and they have justified this confidence ; I mention this not to compliment these two (I will call them) illustrious orders, but to prove by the fact, that the enlightened mind of France is liberal and constitutional, where it is not under the immediate control of the government.

The chamber of deputies, since the last change of the election law, is so constituted that the minister can always have a sweeping majority: but the nation is reconciled to this sort of representation, by the freedom of speech and of the press, and by the independence and eloquence, reaching the public, of some dozen able and popular deputies, who can hardly be excluded.

The French are supposed frivolous, or otherwise mal-organized for freedom. This I believe is a mistake: they succumbed to Bonaparte from the terror of jacobinism and lassitude of revolution. They received the Bourbons at the point of the foreign bayonet, from the evils inflicted on them by the reckless despotism and ambition of Bonaparte; but they are now in a condition to reflect steadily upon their power and their rights; they see those rights assailed directly by arbitrary measures, acts of intolerance, and the daring pretensions of the spiritual or theocratic power over the thoughts and consciences of the living, and over the last remains of the dead.

The liberal and constitutional opinion of France regards the restoration of servilism in Spain, as a step gained against the liberty of the French nation—and the defeat of the intrigue against Portugal as one gained in its favour. There is, besides, the numerous, intelli-

gent, and powerful class of merchants and manufacturers, who consider the ascendant of Mr. Canning as the pledge and prop of freedom of trade, and the peace of Europe.

Is this no barrier to the French propagandists of political and religious slavery? What else but the dread of this formidable power, and the decisive course adopted by the government, parliament, and people of England, prevented the Jesuit ministry of France from prosecuting against Portugal, as they commenced, the profligate intrigue which they had successfully played against Spain.* The Bourbons fear the liberal or constitutional opinion of France—or they do not. If they do not fear and reverence it, so much the worse for them—opinion drove James the second and his Jesuits out of England.

There is then in Europe a vast force, not alone of ambition, restlessness and discontent, but of intelligence, patriotism and indepen-

* Mr. Canning declared in Parliament substantially, as well as I recollect, that he had every assurance of the disposition of the French government to dissuade the unjustifiable proceedings of Spain against Portugal—I pretend to dive into no man's conscience—least of all should I presume to dive into Mr. Canning's. But I will permit myself to presume that the Right Honourable Secretary took the assurances of M. de Villele, who was quite neutral between the Cortes and the bands of the faith, at their proper value.

dence, which must be ranged on the side of this country, in a war, as it must be, of conflicting opinions and parties—a struggle between ignorance and knowledge, intolerance and liberality, absolute monarchy and constitutional freedom, contending for supremacy—in society and in the state.

But it has been retorted upon Mr. Canning from many quarters—have you no discontented spirits at home—in Ireland—ready for foreign invasion ?

I neither overlook nor deny that in Ireland the united kingdom is vulnerable—and in a vital part. It is even my intention to hold up in outline, as faithfully, by a few strokes of the pencil, as I am able, the real state of Ireland, to all parties. The occasion does not admit of distant retrospect, or marked periods ; but contemplate, through the scenes of ferocious animosity—desperate crime—horrible retribution of law—misery unexampled wasting the poor people—the domestic heart—(and that shrine of nature has its worship among the unhappy peasantry of Ireland)—the domestic heart—in every relation the most nervously tender—of father, mother, brother, sister, wife, child—agonized by every variety of human suffering—hunger, thirst, cold—and the scourge of a savage, armed, uncontrolled police—contemplate, I say, through all this, the Catholic

mind of Ireland, gathering strength, unity, and courage—and taking its position in advance as a matter of undisputed right. To go no farther back than a very few years, reflect on what the Catholics of Ireland were then—and on what, in force and attitude, they are now.

There was, as well as I remember, a Catholic spouting club, under some name, half a dozen years since; but it had little or no influence over the Catholic population. The people, intent only on the grievances at their doors—the sordid miscalculating rapacity of landowners—the vulgar villainy of land-jobbers—the still more odious exactions of tithe-jobbers—the profligate variety of crime, committed by corrupt, bigotted, sanguinary magistrates, and other privileged village tyrants—the people, I say, intent only on these, their immediate and pressing wrongs: were, in the absence of all law and right, taking the law into their own hands, and, as must always happen in such a case, wreaking a blind and horrible retributive vengeance by outrage, bloodshed, and conflagration. This was deplorable, but not politically dangerous. The half-famished, half-frantic peasantry, though stiled insurgents in the formal language of the law, had no thought either of separation, or emancipation, or of the Catholic Association, or of the British Parliament.

Contrast with this the state of Catholic Ireland at the present time.

In the first place, a new power has started up in the Catholic clergy, and this growth is the consequence of the short-sighted petty policy of the faction that has too long governed England as well as Ireland. The brilliant idea entered these wise heads, to educate the Catholic priesthood at home, in order to prevent their being inoculated with Gallican or other anti-British feelings. What is the consequence? A race of priests has sprung up, in religion more Catholic than if they had been educated in France, Italy, Portugal or Spain; in politics, not only national but democratic, and exercising accumulated influence from their unbroken connection, kindred, and sympathy, with the Catholic peasantry of Ireland.

The second power that has grown up is the so called Catholic Association, which, visibly and confessedly, has such a dominion of the Catholic mind, “for good or for evil,” that the legislature has brought its own omnipotence and the engine of the law to suppress it—and has failed.

Which is the more powerful, of the clergy or the association—which, or whether either make compromises to the other—or whether they are bodies really distinct, I will not stop to inquire: and especially for this reason. I am

convinced as of my existence—and it is a conviction of knowledge—that both the clergy and the association are powerless; only so far as they go with the feelings—with the passions of the Catholic people. They seem to lead when they are only carried. How many obnoxious priests have received the discipline from the hands of Captain Rock, on suspicion of disaffection to his will and pleasure? Is it to be supposed the same hands would not inflict the same discipline on the bare backs of the Catholic associators, if equally obnoxious and within reach? But both the priests and the association see the necessity of unity amongst each other, and of committing themselves with the current of the Catholic popular feeling. They seem to ride and rule the waves of the multitude, which bear them along, and under which they would sink if they attempted resistance.

What is the consequence of this state of things, recently exhibited? The Catholic Association, lay and clerical, have so much influence, so much national confidence, such an understanding with the whole Catholic population, that no constituted, formal, recognized authority, could exercise higher attributes, or more efficient powers. They have exercised the first most difficult, and in fact paramount supremacy—that of the purse—by simple ap-

peal to the free-will and patriotism of the Catholics; and the fund thus raised, is expended under the eyes of the people, in their own or their neighbours' cause, in bringing to justice the trading, bigotted, or oppressive magistrate, the privileged partisan, tyrant, oppressor, wrong-doer, of whatever class. The Catholic rent—as this subscription was called—did more for the Catholics, and even for the state, than all the acts of Parliament since the Union. It made the peasantry sensible from experience, that there was such a thing as law in the country—and that money, intelligence, and a little public spirit, were alone necessary to come within its protection and vindication.

A still more decisive trial remained—that of a general election. We know that the political and religious conscience of an elector, capitulates at discretion with a patron or a landlord, even in public spirited and Protestant England. In Ireland the landlord drove in his voters to the hustings as he did his cattle to the fair. What must have been the surprise of the wholesale jobber in popish votes and no-popery politics, to find the forty-shilling freeholder coming up to the poll with a conscience, a will, and a vote of his own. There is no wrong so palpable but long habit and prescription will turn it into a right in the imagination of the habituated, hardened, profiting wrong doer.

Hence the outcry in Ireland about the “Rebellion of the tenants against their landlords,” (rebellion forsooth!) and the audacity of popish priests in meddling with elections, as if a freeholder from being poor was to have neither a conscience nor a country—and a Catholic priest was not a Catholic citizen. I am no friend to the dominion of the Catholic or any other clergy, in Ireland, or elsewhere; but when a Catholic priest assumes the citizen for any purpose, it is a good omen. When he proves himself a good citizen, I give him much more credit than to another.

Here then is the Catholic body in Ireland, growing every day and every hour in political strength, proving its force as it advances—and now undistracted, unanimous, and intently resolved to obtain its liberty from England.

But the Catholics profess themselves loyal subjects, and seek their emancipation only through constitutional means! I admit and believe it. Yet I would not have the loyalty or temper of the Catholics, or any other loyal subjects so circumstanced, put to the extremity of trial. Injustice will break the nearest and dearest bonds, and is indeed the great provocative to independence.

“L’injustice à la fin, prodiut l’indépendance.”

He knows little of the mind, and still less of

the history of man, who does not know how men's views expand, and their hearts swell with the great questions of independence, liberty, and country. It took but a little time to change the Americans from loyal subjects to republicans. What is the staminal force and predisposition of the Catholic people of Ireland? In three of the four provinces they constitute the great mass of the population. The embers of the late rebellion are not yet cold in the bosoms of the survivors, and they are cherished in the kindred of those who fell, or have passed away—this in a country where the ties of blood are passions, not sentiments—where it is virtue and a pious duty to avenge them—where the organization, as well as the embers of the rebellion, live as the vestal fire—where the people are disciplined in the craft of mysterious association—where discovery is rendered difficult, not only by the skill and expertness with which they are leagued and drilled in mysterious subordination, but by two powerful sanctions—certain execration, and almost certain and terrible vengeance upon the informer. A population hardy, wretched, reckless, and brave so prepared and predisposed for disaffection and invasion, is indeed a serious charge on the hands of a British minister in a war—suppose with France.

But what, it will be said, is an ignorant pea-

santry, with nothing but its brute force, destitute of intellect to form and direct it? Far be it from me to suppose that the Catholic leaders could be converted into separatists. I believe, indeed, that Mr. O'Connell, for instance, has as salutary a deference for the 25th Ed. III. as an Irish privy councillor. In short, Mr. O'Connell has proved his loyalty in the most trying time. The man who entertained Bolivar sentiments in his advanced age, and was yet loyal in 1798, and in his youth, is rebellion proof. Mr. Sheil is a young man, and seems to have ambition, ardour, and education, beyond the conceptions or faculties of Mr. O'Connell. But Mr. Sheil says, he not only is not a separatist, but would be the first victim of loyalty. Both these gentlemen would, I fear, be offended at my opinion of them—Mr. O'Connell at this imputation of loyalty, rebellion proof—Mr. Sheil at the suggestion of a bare ethical possibility of his becoming a separatist.

Let the Catholic leaders be thrown overboard, and the Irish peasantry will still find leaders. No science more readily suggests and perfects itself, than the melancholy one of mutual destruction. There is nothing more easy than to make a soldier, except perhaps to make an alderman, or a lord mayor; and the Irish peasantry have, I believe, this aptitude or organ of

conversion, much more than the recently discovered one, of conversion to the reformed church. It is much more easy to make an Irish peasant a soldier, than a Protestant. The priests—at least the more young and enthusiastic,—uncultivated, perhaps, in conventional politeness and the refinements of life, but cultivated and informed in solid knowledge—would become their leaders, in every sense. They are, I have already said, not merely Catholic, but democratic, national; and, therefore, even unconsciously to themselves, resting on an inclined plane, so that a slight impulse would bear them on to separation and independence. Every Protestant is not necessarily a partisan of the connection with England. Witness the Protestant united Irish system,—the Protestant rebellion, of 1798.

We hear every day of the excrescent surplus of Irish population. Is it not reasonable to suppose, as there is an unemployed and unfed surplus of physical strength, and physical wants, so also there is that “busy devil,” an unemployed overplus of intellect. I have already mentioned the effect of those ideas, abstract ideas if you will—but yet those elements of animation and action—liberty and our country; at the contemplation of which, the view enlarges, and the imagination is fired. Add to

this, ambition and revenge—for Catholics were not alone the victims of the rebellion,—and there will be, I think, enough of intellectual fire to animate the inert mass of the people. How large—how incalculable a proportion of those offsprings of the French Revolution, who conquered and governed Europe—in the field, and in the cabinet, issued from the common—the very commonest people. An Irishman dares contemplate the independence of his country. He conceives that he has the same sphere of right, of patriotism, and of public duty open to him, as an Anglo American Colonist; but his humanity may start back from the horrors of a civil war weighed against the possibility of French domination, and the chances of success; and his reason discovers the balance of advantage for his country, in identification unqualified and entire with England. Another Irishman, in the same position, may arrive at a different conclusion. A more sanguine temperament—a stronger national sense of the wrongs of England for centuries—an exalted or desperate ambition—magnificent prospects,—present disappointment—the assurance of the ruling party in France, that the object is not Catholicism, or union with France, but simply separation from England, and the reduction of the Protestant church of Ireland to an equality

with the Catholic—these considerations may induce another, a hundred other Irishmen, above the common class, to risk all the horrors of a civil war and foreign invasion, for the vision of national independence. One word more upon the question of French interference. The French liberals have no settled wish or project for the separation of Ireland,—*but the Jesuits have,*—and the principle of a French invasion of Ireland must be such as would either make the liberals and Jesuits co-operate, or, at least, reduce the former to silence. The invasion of Spain, by the Jesuits, was a fair subject of outcry to the liberals. The invasion of Ireland would be a point in which, from their own principles, the liberals must concur; and which, perhaps, would awake ancient resentments against England.

Ireland then, I repeat, is a most vulnerable part of the kingdom, a most perilous charge on the hands of a minister, in a war with France.

But does this reach Mr. Canning, a leading object of whose political life has been, to remove the Catholic disabilities, tranquillize Ireland, and render her a really integral part of the United Kingdom?

Those who have defeated every effort to tranquillize Ireland—who have kept alive the unhallowed flame of religious animosity, who

would blow it into fiercer fury still—those are they upon whose conscience the state of Ireland should press with the weight and torture of remorse.

Nothing, however, would be more unjust, more unphilosophical, than to impute bad faith, or even bigotry, to every Protestant whom popery inspires with alarm, and who resists the admission of the Catholics within the pale of the Constitution. The History of England is, more than that of any other nation, a tissue of religious and sectarian animosity and persecution. The inflammable rancour which still survives in sects and parties, darkens and disturbs the honest no-popery man's natural judgment and sense of right. A certain confusion has been industriously created in his ideas, which renders him unable to distinguish the Church from the Constitution. He has been taught to believe that the Church of Rome is the only one that favours despotism, the Church of England one that necessarily resists it, that Catholicism and slavery, Protestantism and liberty, are necessarily synonymous. With this absurd proposition firmly rooted in his mind, he confounds a rancorous hostility to the Catholics with attachment to liberty, and the Constitution. His terrors are from time to time artfully and wickedly excited by a cry of danger to the Church, and whilst he is wasting

his fury upon the phantom of popery, through the sides of his Catholic fellow subjects, he is bowing, or he has been bowing, his own neck to the hereditary high church yoke of those who deluded but to enslave him. He is the dupe of a party, and the victim of a stratagem. I will not enter into discussion, but I would place one fact before the honest anti-Catholic, and let him ruminate on it—it is this : religious liberty has gradually but rapidly risen above Romanism on the Continent ; it has made great strides, but has not yet overtopped the prejudices, antipathies, and alarms of Protestantism in England. Whence this conquest made by religious freedom and humanity ? Whence, but from the resistless moral force of truth ? “ Who knows not,” says Esdras, “ that truth is strong next to the Almighty.”

It were idle to argue with the calculators on the profits of no-popery politics. There is but one argument that can have effect with them, and I cannot command it : neither will I endeavour here to enlighten or argue with the mere bigot, the church-going intolerant, or that more nauseous reptile, the ignorant, drivelling, or artful, canting, and always presumptuous methodist.

But I would beg leave, most reverentially and sincerely, to address a word to my Lords the Bishops. My intentions are far from inimical.

I am in favour of a dominant church, and I wish that dominant church to be the Church of England, because it is the most learned and tolerant, the least meddling, and the least molesting to private conscience, or intellectual liberty, that I know. I do not envy the Church its wealth, or question the Church's right to it, though I see all that is invidious and dangerous in the union of wealth and religion. Nothing indeed has proved more fatal to religion than riches. *Religio peperit divitias et filia devoravit matrem*—is a saying as true as it is ancient. But let this pass. What I would humbly submit to my Lords the Bishops is not—to be tolerant, for they are tolerant—not—to vote for the Catholic claims, for that is a matter upon which they have at least as much right to judge as others; but to remember the essential difference between their hierarchy and that of Rome—to remember that they are not an independent power in the realm—but exist by, and under the legislature; and, as a corollary from this, to beware of interfering between parliament and the sovereign on the one side, between parliament and the people on the other. The emancipation of the Catholics is a question for the three estates—the King and the two houses. It is a question essentially political, and the bishop who privately in-

sinuates his spiritual advice and influence into the royal ear upon the subject, acts in the spirit of that “English though not Roman popery,” alluded to by the great Lord Faulkland in 1641, as fatal both to royalty and episcopacy. They have an illustrious historical example in their own order—that of the seven bishops. These enlightened and independent prelates declared expressly to King James, that they declined promulgating the indulgence, not because it was an indulgence of toleration to Catholics, but because it was an exercise of prerogative by the crown, which parliament had declared illegal and unconstitutional. Next, I would humbly advise them to beware of interference between parliament and the people. Can the Protestant religion, the Church of England, and the peace of the realm derive any thing but injury from no-popery petitions, got up by jobbing partisans, or poured out upon the legislature by persons inflamed or drunk from the cup of discord and intolerance, administered to them from the pulpit and the tavern? The clergy of the establishment have had a great and disgraceful share in these exhalations of bigotry and imposture.

Have not the church and the nation suffered too much, from the Beals and the Mannerings of one age, and the Sacheverells of another,

suggesting despotism to the monarch, and inflaming the credulous ignorance of the people? The high Tory champions of the present day have less power to be mischievous, but they are of the same noxious breed of officious, ambitious churchmen, courting worldly riches and promotion, sincere only in the factitious animosity which the deserter or traducer always feels against the persons or the principles which he has deserted or traduced. Look at the reverend no-popery pamphleteers of the day—is there a suggestion made for the benefit of mankind, to improve the mind, or even the physical condition of the people—to afford them the light of knowledge and education, to which they have the same right as to the light of day, and which is no less beneficial—but is met with a defamatory outcry by these Swiss mercenaries, catching at church promotion? What is the consequence? It is, that the very supposition of this dirty road leading to preferment in the church brings disgrace upon religion—and that it would appear the church was specially interested in ignorance, bigotry, and intolerance—which most certainly is not the fact. These labourers should be discouraged in their vile vocation.*

* It is difficult now to say any thing new for or against the Catholic claims, and I am far from such a pretension; but there

I cannot help adding here, what it may appear presumptuous to suppose, that if I had the honour of approaching his Majesty, and the opportunity of addressing him for a moment—that moment, though it were the only one in which I should address or approach him of my life, would be employed in submitting to the royal mind that the repeal of all religious disabilities is wanting to the strength and safety of his kingdom, and to the glory of his reign. Indulging in this license of dramatizing, I picture

are two objections made, by some of the more respectable Anticatholics, upon which I shall touch,—the bad taste and violence of the Catholics of Ireland. Both exist—are to be regretted, and are excusable. In Ireland the populace and the haranguers mutually corrupt each other. Long suffering under the penal laws has inflamed the religious feelings of the Catholics, and long civil debasement has given them a thirst for nauseous flattery whereby to allay the sense of degradation. “The Irish Catholics,” says Burke, in a confidential letter to Fox, “are reduced to beasts of burthen, and will give you all they have—their shoulders—if they are flattered.” They now have more to give than their shoulders—but they have the same depraved appetite for flattery. Emancipation will not only correct this vice of taste, but take them out of the hands of those who administer to it. As to their violence—men who consider themselves unjustly excluded from their dearest rights, cannot be expected, nor would it be their interest, to be mute or patient. I have read somewhere the remark that fishes are subjected to processes of infliction and cruelty, from which our other subjects in the brute kingdom are exempt—only because fishes, unhappily for them, are mute.

to myself some future historian of the present times, sketching his Majesty's character:—

“ George the Fourth was a prince who inspired the highest hopes in his early youth. He was born with the unruly ardour of the passions—but also with their generosity—to which inbred talents are so nearly allied. His rank, his dissipation, and his brilliant personal endowments, brought round him a host of those most distinguished for talents, wit, accomplishments, and dissolute gaiety—who quartered themselves upon his youth, and attended him in the wild path of the passions and of pleasure. But whilst such converse tended to corrupt and to enchain him, it exercised his talents, cultivated his tastes, and made him—that which undoubtedly he was, in the liberal and polished arts—the most accomplished person of his realm. The vicissitudes of politics and of party subjected him, whilst yet regent of the kingdom, to bitter resentments, and as bitter obloquy, personal and political. But as he had redeemed the errors of his youth before he yet became ruler, so also he beheld every shadow of obloquy and imputation vanish, without an effort on his part, when he yet but a few years occupied the throne. He found the kingdom engaged in a war, long maintained on each side with unparalleled valour and resources. By his

wise and brave counsels, he concluded it with unparalleled glory to the British name. The war ended, his mind was turned to the arts of peace. Civilization and science now rapidly advanced. The intellect of the nation turned inwardly upon her own resources ; and the light of knowledge—the power of science—brought to bear upon the resources of the nation, found liberal access to the councils of the sovereign. The fine arts were still more peculiarly and personally indebted to the king. A school of British artists grew up—for the first time entitled to be called a school, by talents, number, and variety. He found the capital of his kingdom wealthy, populous, well built, but wholly deficient in architectural beauty. In the few first years of peace and of his reign, magnificent lines and masses of building, with somewhat of the faulty wildness of a yet imperfect, but ardent taste for the eternal remains and models of antiquity, made it by far the first capital, for the splendour and graces of modern architecture, in the world. All this was the effect, not of ostentatious royal patronage, but of the personal taste and example of the king. He found Ireland distracted by political faction and religious fury—the theatre of almost every kind of human wretchedness and human atrocity—worse than useless in peace, worse than powerless in war

—[*must the picture remain unfinished here—and shall I not proceed?*—He saw the cause of this disastrous phenomenon by the light of his own mind, and that of the best and ablest of his counsellors, and of his subjects. He moderately and progressively, but firmly, removed from the religious conscience of his people the gangrened remnants of political disabilities, imposed in disturbed and dangerous times—and he beheld Ireland a powerful, integral, and most devoted part of his kingdom.”

I have little more to add in this long letter—or rather, I would briefly recapitulate. The ascending subtile power of opinion and intelligence has thrown off the Eldon party—and the King, instead of forcing back these rejected and repulsive ingredients of the ministry, has left them to perish unheeded in their worthlessness. The King is at the head of a national administration, to which only the off-scourings of the two great parties—the reprobate radicals, and the reprobate tories—are opposed. This puts the sovereign in the best position abroad to continue the state of peace; or, if that be rendered inconsistent with the interest and honour of England—in the best position to wage war. Thus far as to our foreign relations. For our domestic interests, I have rather appealed to than taken the useless trouble of proving the

advantages which the national industry and resources derive from an administration, keeping pace with the nation and the age. And as to the question of civil and religious liberty—the last hold of the intolerants—if that should prove a check to the grand movement—if the royal mind should be worked on by intimidation, intrigue, or priestcraft—by “the English, though not Roman popery”—which cost Charles the First his head, and James the Second his crown—I shall only regret, if it should happen, as I am, for one, confident it will not, that this complement to the full glory of George the Fourth should be left to his successor.

A D D E N D U M.

Since the foregoing was written the session of Parliament has approached its close. In the House of Commons nothing followed the comical exhibitions of Sir T. Lethbridge, and the coarse virulence of Mr. Dawson; a person who seems alike vulgar in his passions and his capacity, who never should have risen above the lead of an alehouse Orange club in Ireland, and never would, but for his use to Mr. Peel, as a vehicle wherever that prudent person wishes to gratify his enmities, by ways which would compromise his own dignity and taste.

The budget was brought before the House by Mr. Canning—it excited little interest and no opposition. There was no secret to be disclosed—no new plan to be submitted—and the statement of the minister, moderate and frank, was received with confidence and cordiality by the House. It is true, that Mr. Canning neither proposed nor promised to pay off the national debt, or reduce thirty millions of taxes, which

some persons appeared to have expected. Upon a message from the crown, respecting the additional charge for the troops in Portugal, Mr. Bankes—a very silly person, who would have it thought that he holds principles and an opinion of his own,—though he can get nobody to think he holds either—made some silly objections to that act of government which prevented the French from adding to the occupation of Spain that of Portugal, and extending to the unwilling and mistaken Portuguese the blessings of a paternal religious monarchy like that of Ferdinand.

In the House of Lords, Lord Londonderry's powder was soon burned out. Having failed to bring down Lords Goderich and Lansdowne across the table, and Mr. Canning at a long shot, by a discharge of senseless and clownish ribbalds—having of course failed to convince their lordships, even his co-mate, Lord Ellenborough, that he was a man of sense—he trumpeted himself as a man of spirit, and disappeared. He is now it seems proceeding in appeal to try the question of his “sense,” before the tribunal of the public, by printing a book. Now the book will either “write him down” the same wise lord he was before—or it will not. If it should not, no human creature will believe it his by any other title than that of the lady, in one of Martial's epigrams, to her hair.

Lord Londonderry said in the Lords that he was attempted to be run down by “a vile and venal press.” Some other lords cannot conceive how nearly all the newspapers of capacity and credit, in the metropolis and throughout the kingdom, should approve a minister without having touched “the secret service money”—and some profound and searching questions were put respecting this mysterious fund. No one would be surprised to find lords ignorant; but that they should indulge in imputations at once ignorant, impotent, and Dawsonish, is surprising.

One deep and deadly blow was given by the Lords, not indeed to the ministry, or rather the minister, at whom it was aimed, but to the character and public estimation of the Lords themselves, by their defeat of the Corn Bill. There are in the House of Commons doubtless many uninformed and selfish land-owners, who would think only of their high rents in the midst of an overworked and famished population. But there is also, in that house, a large proportion of instructed and enlightened land-proprietors: and these, with the representatives of the manufacturing wealth and industry of the nation, enabled the minister to make some progress at least, towards such a system as would allow the people a chance of reasonably cheap food from their labour and from Provi-

dence. In the House of Lords it is different: there all are lords of the soil; and the great mass, actuated by motives the most selfish, sordid, and unenlightened, stopped the government in its course. And who was put forward, who was used (as the more cunning animal used the paw of his inferior brother of the fire-side fable) in the shameful and shallow contrivance by which the corn measure was defeated? The Duke of Wellington, a person so uninformed and incompetent on the subject that he attended the deliberations in council without understanding one tittle of the matter—(I pass over his tergiversation)—so ignorant as to propose and, *proh pudor!* to cause the adoption of an amendment, barbarous in style, and, as to its construction, placed in the dilemma of being either self-contradictory or unmeaning. Incapable people are usually the most jealous, and upon the precise point of their incapacity. Hence, probably, the Duke of Wellington's amendment, drawn up by himself, was left unrevised. Lord Malmsbury, the son of a grammarian, might, one would think, without offence, have ventured to offer some assistance to his Grace. And who, besides the selfish, sordid, unenlightened mass of the Lords of the soil, carried through this clumsy amendment? On one side, the very ministers who had given their best counsel and sanction to the original measure

in the cabinet, before God, their country, and their king ; on the other, a person opposed in party opinions to these new compeers, wide as the poles asunder, and who has professed himself favourable to the principle of free trade in corn, far beyond the extent of the bill—in a word, Lord Grey. The former are much more excusable. They lost their places, to which alone they gave any consideration, and which alone gave them any. Lord Grey too has lost his place in the country, by indulging this pitiful envy of Mr. Canning, and his pique against the whigs, because they did not continue to hang on as an idle pageant in his train. But if the check which this precious amendment has given to the progress of reason, freedom, and humanity in the commerce of human food, should co-operate hereafter with any unforeseen vicissitudes of nature or of events, in driving half-famished, unemployed, or overworked populations, to violence, outrage, and despair, the Lords are not to be envied their reflections. It was done in ignorance ; aye, but how enlightened were the lords of the soil upon the pernicious doctrine of monopoly and forced prices, whilst the march of government and of reason yet touched other interests only ; those for instance, of weavers and spinners ! The fears of these poor people were narrow-minded and mistaken, which indeed was the fact ; but with the lords

of the soil it was an experiment *in corpore vili*, and the ministerial operator might go on. It is the fate of these hard-hearted land-owners that their motives should be odious even when they assisted in doing good. Lord Grey has said that he will stand or fall with his order. If his Lordship means that he will stand or fall with the selfish band that seems leagued to keep up their bloated, unnatural, and unenduring rent-rolls, though the people starve, or with the less numerous but not less powerful band of aristocratical borough-owners, who seem leagued against the freedom and independence not only of the people but of the parliament, the administration, and the sovereign, then his very enemies may give Lord Grey joy most sincerely upon his magnanimity.

An interesting publication has appeared, and from an unexpected quarter. It is the joint contribution of Lord Kenyon, the most illiberal and one of the most simple-minded peers of the realm, and that worthy pioneer of illiberalism in politics and theology, Doctor Philpotts, and consists of written communications between the late King, Lord Kenyon, and Mr. Pitt, on the subject of the Catholic question and the coronation oath, at distant periods. What could have induced the publication for no-popery purposes is not easily comprehended. It is at most a two-edged sword, but it cuts

much more keenly for the Catholics. Lord Kenyon, though opposed to the Catholics, labours to convince the royal mind that the coronation oath did not affect the question in its just and constitutional construction, and Mr. Pitt urges the wisdom of admitting the Catholics within the constitution, with more force than he ever did in Parliament. The principal effect of this publication is that the character of Mr. Pitt is raised at the cost of the late king. An Irish Bishop, one of the Beresfords (it is said), a marked name in Ireland, prompted His Majesty's conscience, and most probably, from some change of style in the royal communications, supplied the historical research, and revised the royal epistles behind the curtain. The first short note to Lord Kenyon is so illiterate and ignorant that the editors might, for the honour of Majesty, have retouched it. This is not all. Whilst the King was communing with the Bishop and consulting Lord Kenyon, Mr. Pitt was left and kept in utter ignorance, even when he was afterwards holding out hopes to the Irish Catholics, in return for their support of the union, which he certainly would not have had the treachery to hold out if he knew that they could not be fulfilled. There is a striking display of the late King's delight in over-reaching men of talents, by little arts of cajolery and cunning, but so

shallow in this instance that Pitt could not have been imposed on—who, moreover, knew the illustrious person well. He is profuse of affectionate wheedling to a man whom certainly he did not love ; and when required by the minister to conceal his private opinion of the coronation oath, he manages an escape by saying he cannot help if people should guess right. Mr. Pitt's sincerity and unchanged opinion on the Catholic claims is, in spite of the hardihood of old George Rose and old Lord Eldon, placed beyond a doubt ; and as to his return to office, there was in it, perhaps, not more of personal ambition than of lofty patriotism.

THE END.

